

# Does a Time-Of-Use (TOU) Plan Save Me Money?

With Time-of-use (TOU) rates the price you pay for electricity varies according to the time of day. Higher prices are charged during peak hours and lower prices are charged during off peak hours. Rates are also typically higher in summer months than in winter months.

TURN's analysis shows that large users will benefit the most from TOU rates, and customers who use less could end up paying more. Despite TURN's objections, the California Public Utilities Commission has authorized utilities to move most customers to TOU rates in 2019 (for SDG&E) or 2020 (for PG&E and SCE). However, due to TURN's advocacy, CARE and FERA customers in hot climate zones will not be involuntarily moved to TOU rates unless they affirmatively choose such a rate.

## What Will The TOU plans look like?

Utilities are proposing the highest priced "Peak" periods to fall within:

- 4 PM to 9 PM
- 5 PM to 8 PM

TOU residential rate plans vary from utility to utility and may include more than two TOU rate plans.

Customers will be switched or defaulted to TOU unless they "opt out". You can call your utility and ask them not to place you on a TOU rate plan or to switch you back to your old tiered rate plan if you are "defaulted" or switched to TOU.

## Is a time-of-use plan the best plan for you?

Customers who use very little electricity, or those who are mostly at home and using appliances or air conditioning during the peak hours of 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., may see higher bills, especially those in hotter climates. Those who are able to adjust their usage because they are not at home at that time, or have the flexibility to use some of the strategies below, might find these rates advantageous.

PG&E, Edison and SDG&E have rate plan comparison tools on their websites that consumers can utilize to compare their bills under both tiered and TOU plans. If you have questions, customer service should be able to help.

*Medical Baseline customers will not be automatically enrolled and CARE/FERA customers in hot climate baseline territories are exempted.*

## TOU Pilot Projects

Pacific Gas & Electric and Edison will be moving all of their customers to TOU rates starting in 2020 (2019 for SDG&E), but it will not happen all at once, so most people have nothing to worry about yet. But if you are one of the customers chosen for "pilot projects" that started in 2018, your bill could be changing much sooner. The good news is, thanks to TURN, you will have the option of opting out of time-of-use rates, or be able to recoup any overpayments if you choose to try the new rates.

Utility companies randomly selected customers statewide to participate in TOU pilots. Some customers were chosen to participate in TOU pilots around March-June of 2018. They are ongoing and will continue for another year, until the utilities start full-scale default TOU in 2019 and 2020.

If chosen, consumers should receive clear, understandable notifications from their utility company that includes information on how to opt out for those who don't want to participate in the pilot. Each company has said customers chosen for the pilot will receive 3 separate notifications.

*TIP: If you are on medical baseline or on CARE and located in a "hot climate zone", you won't be included in the pilot programs.*

## You Can Opt-Out

If you are selected to participate in a time-of-use pilot program, and don't want to, you have the option of opting out of the pilot and choose either the old, tiered rate system or a different rate, without any additional charges. Call your utility Company to opt out!

## Speak Out!

Remember, if you have complaints about hard-to-understand marketing materials, higher bills, confusing information, or inadequate customer service, you can let the California Public Utilities Commission know through filing a complaint at [www.turn.org](http://www.turn.org), or contact the Commission directly. The CPUC has ordered utilities to switch the rates, and needs to hear about any problems customers experience during these pilots in order to improve the programs before switching all customers in 2020. The good news is that when that does happen, the bill protections won by TURN will remain in place at least for the first year, and customers will always have the choice to opt-out.

## Exercise Your Rights

If you need to file a complaint with the California Public Utilities Commission you can do it online at: <https://appsssl.cpuc.ca.gov/cpucapplication/> or if it is an emergency call 1-800-649-7570



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